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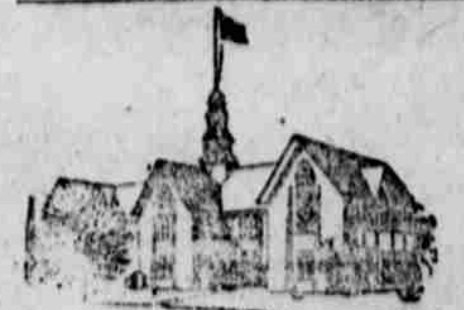
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AKKAYAK'S BACKSLIDING

By ROSE HUGHES LEECH

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Akkayak pushed his kayak out into the blue waters of Grantly harbor and, following the golden track of sunlight on its breast, headed for the Nook, the tiny Eskimo village across the bay. A wild duck rose from the water and circled daintily above his head with a defiant scream, noting no move of the Eskimo toward the gun at his side.

For Akkayak's thoughts were not with the joys of the hunt as he swept his kayak with even strokes toward the north, but only of Iwonna, the daughter of Stony Tom, the prettiest Eskimo maiden at the Nook and the torment of Akkayak's life. For Akkayak was a serious minded and industrious individual and had, moreover, deep religious convictions implanted in his breast by long training at the missionary's school. He went about the wooing of Iwonna in the same sad and fervent way that he said his prayers, with the result that the maiden scorned him openly, much to the edification of Spoon, who had of late chosen to pass his idle moments—and most of Spoon's moments were idle—around the egrow of Stony Tom.

If only he—Akkayak—had not been a Christian! Matters could have been easily adjusted then and Spoon wiped from the face of the earth. But of course this could not be. Akkayak liked meat as well as any other Eskimo, but he did not want it served on a fork in allopathic doses, and the missionary had assured him that murderers had to take it that way after they crossed the great divide.

But have Iwonna be would despite all the Spoons in Alaska! His boat grated on the beach, and with this thought uppermost in his mind he turned toward her home and was somewhat taken back to find his hated rival seated close, very close, to her on an overturned butter case. They were eating oranges! Shades of extravagance, oranges! Where had Spoon procured them? Akkayak had his dark



A STRONG RIGHT HAND BLOW SENT SPOON INTO A SNOWDRIFT.

suspensions, but he hid them manfully and greeted the girl and her companion with a polite "Tigidiokotn." Iwonna had on a new red calico parka and was prettier and more insolent than usual. Akkayak turned with dignity and strode to where Stony Tom sat on a pile of skins outside the egrow door.

After a guttural greeting, listlessly returned by Stony Tom, he spoke as follows:

"I come to ask you to give me Iwonna for my squaw. Good egrow have I and plenty good furs and much wood for the winter's coming. Plenty of dried tomcod also have I, and no man's dogs are better than mine. And I myself am a Christian man and good and drink no white man's whisky. In my egrow Iwonna can live all the same as white woman and Iwonna's father shine as the sun."

Stony Tom shifted his tobacco to the other side of his capacious mouth and replied briefly:

"Me like you. You got plenty kow-kow (food), plenty good egrow. Iwonna him like Spoon. Me speak Iwonna like you. Iwonna go quick to Spoon. Me wait. You wait. By and by plenty good time."

And with such advice Akkayak was fain to be content. He had no other rival. True, Okbauk, from Cape Prince of Wales, came occasionally to see Stony Tom, but he never looked at Iwonna.

And this moon waxed and waned, and the great white silence fell, so that the suitors of Iwonna went by sled to the Nook. And the old Eskimo woman put their heads together and said it was a shame the way the girl acted. What did the men see in the creature anyway? Great staring eyes and a

mouth that giggled continually! Secretly they all hoped the girl's choice would fall on Spoon, leaving Akkayak for one of their daughters, for Akkayak was a "cutch." The old men said the fact that Stony Tom favored the suit of Akkayak made it quite certain that she would not choose him, and they banked largely upon Spoon.

But Iwonna kept her own counsel and accepted all tributes of oranges and loaf sugar with a placid smile. She was careful, however, to decline all gifts of wearing apparel proffered by either suitor, for with the acceptance of such garment she would have pledged herself to take the giver "for better or for worse."

Then there came a time when Akkayak, on his way to Gold Run creek with his dog team, met Spoon on the trail coming to town. Spoon said a few foreboding things and Akkayak forgot his religious training. Over and over they tumbled, and the Malamoot dogs sat down in interested astonishment to watch the fray.

Finally a strong right arm blow of Akkayak sent Spoon headlong into a snowdrift, and it was some time before he staggered to his feet and glared balefully out of his uninjured eye at his hated foe.

"Ugh!" panted Akkayak. "You no go to Iwonna's egrow any more."
Spoon fairly danced with rage as he gasped: "Iwonna like me. She no like you. She say you all the same as white man!"

This was a blow, indeed, but Akkayak knew that veracity was not Spoon's strong point. Still, it did sound like Iwonna's way of talking. After some further altercation they agreed to set out forthwith for the Nook and tell the Sekle maiden, that she must choose one or the other. True, they did not look as presentable as they could have wished for such an errand, but the thing must be settled. Spoon had one eye closed and his garments much bespattered with gore. Akkayak's upper lip was twice its natural size, and his parka, torn midway off his back, dangled forlornly about his heels. He looked anything but the decent Christian Eskimo of other, calmer, days. No word was spoken until they were almost at the Nook, when an unwonted stir about the village caused each to pause and give an astonished "Ugh!"

All the Eskimos in the little settlement seemed to be out and about the egrow of Stony Tom. Was Stony Tom dead? Akkayak thought it possible, for the old man had been complaining of late. Ah, well, all old people must die some time, and squaws who were orphans were really more desirable.

Enlightenment was not long in coming. Out from his egrow stepped Stony Tom, and behind him came Okbauk holding Iwonna by the hand. The girl was dressed in a new and much embroidered fine fur parka and looked very meek. Beside the door stood Okbauk's new sled with ivory runners and six good Malamoot dogs hitched thereto with fancy harness and jingling bells. Okbauk tenderly placed Stony Tom and Iwonna on the sled, wrapped them carefully in furs and, taking his place on the trail ahead of his team, started off toward the north and the home he had prepared for his squaw.

Spoon looked at Akkayak and Akkayak looked at Spoon. For the second time that day Akkayak threw religion to the winds and emphatically swore. Then they turned with one accord and started for Teller in a silence that could be felt.

After a time Spoon said gently, "Getting plenty cold weather."
"Yes," responded Akkayak; "plenty cold."

The Sight of Bees.

A bee has three small, simple eyes, placed in a triangle at the top of the head, at the sides of which are a pair of very large compound eyes. It is generally thought that the former serve for near vision and the latter for seeing things at a distance. Various experiments and calculations have been made to determine the range of the compound eyes, but as they are very difficult in structure from our own it is difficult to come to any certain conclusions. Cleopatra states that at a distance of twenty feet an ordinary hive bee is unable to see anything that is not at least eight or nine inches across, but Lowe is of opinion that objects of from half an inch to an inch in diameter can be distinguished at that distance. If he is correct it follows that large objects might be discerned when as much as a hundred feet away.

That bees fly straight to their hives or nests from long distances probably does not imply keen sight, for we know that many of the lower animals are endowed with a sense of direction far more acute than anything of the kind which we possess.

A Sailor's Yarn

(Original.)

The storm was over, the sun went down in a flame of gold and crimson, and as soon as the crew had been propped up after a long fast and every moment fighting to save the ship we set about repairing what damages we could before night came on and making things snug. Then, halving the watches that 'll might get some sleep within the first four hours, six of us

kept awake while the other six slept. We were ten before the mast, besides the captain and a mate.

I on watch sat on a water cask, for I was too tired to stand and after fighting sleep as I had not fought the wind and waves had just lost myself, when I was aroused by the most unearthly shriek that ever had sounded in that good old ship. It not only awakened me, but the rest of the watch, the helmsman included, and those below came tumbling up from the forecabin, while the captain's head stood out wonderingly above the companionway.

"Who's hurt?" he cried.

"No one on deck," replied the mate. "How is it with you from below?"
"We're all right." There were five of them. On deck were the other five sailors besides the captain and the mate. As soon as it was known that all were present a fear fell on the men, the mate, on all except the captain. At any rate if he was frightened he didn't show it, though the affair nettled him.
"What are you standing there for like a flock of sheep?" he roared. "Come, you," to me, "and you," to the mate. "We three should be enough for some gibbering ape that must have come aboard at the last port and is making havoc below with the stable cargo."

Down the companionway and down into the hold we went, the captain lighting the way with a lantern. We searched the hold from stern to stern, but nothing did we find, though if any one had chosen to hide he could have done it and we been no wiser, for the boxes and barrels had been well shaken by the storm and needed a lot of fixing, and at last the captain, more disgruntled than before, led us up to the deck. We were met by nine inquiring faces, but had nothing to report, and the captain, snarling something like "superstitious curs," instead of giving any information went to his cabin.

Twice during the night the yell was repeated from the hold, but whether the captain preferred to put off any further search till day or was himself converted to the belief that the ship was haunted he did not again appear. For my part, I have no fear of ghosts, but in its stead I was born with a deal of curiosity. Once when I was sleeping below and the thing shrieked I stole out of my bunk and, taking a light, went down to make another try to find the cause. I was groping along, climbing over boxes and barrels, when I received a shock that drew a shriek rivaling those we had heard, for suddenly my light revealed a face so wild, an eye so brilliant with despair, that for a moment I did not doubt I had come upon a lost soul risen from the place of departed spirits.

A man was sitting on a barrel, his legs crossed under him, looking at me with no more surprise than if I had been there always. For a moment I was not sure that he was a man, for his expression was neither that of the living nor of the dead. Never before had I realized the force of the expression of "marrow freezing in one's bones."

But reason soon comes back into play, and in a few moments I knew I was confronted by a maniac. How or when or why he had come to be there I left for another time. What filled my mind then was how to get him out.
"Come with me," I said softly, yet with firmness. And, advancing, I took hold of his clammy hand. To my surprise, he suffered me to lead him like a little child, and, making our way through and over the cargo, I led him on deck.

The dawn had meanwhile come, and a faint light gave a better sight of him. He had on the shreds of a sailor's costume, but nothing on his head or feet. I called the mate, who came staring, and I gave him a brief account of how I had found our new shipmate. We questioned him, but got no reply. While we were trying to get something out of him the captain came on deck.

A sailor standing on the bowsprit called out that there was a raft lashed to the chains. That revealed the whole matter. The man had been wrecked, had taken to the raft, struck our ship in the night and after lashing his boat clambered on deck. But how in his crazed condition he had the natural sense to do so is a matter rather for those who have studied lunacy than a sailor man with no education.

We took the man down to the galley and gave him the first thing some warm broth. This we followed by meat and little by little let him have a fair meal. His reason returned, and he told us of his ship being put on beam ends in the storm, his talking to the raft with seven others, who were all washed off, remembering everything till the last man left him, and he was alone watching every mountain billow, expecting that it would send him to join his lost companions. His meeting our ship, the lashing of the raft to the chains, his getting into the hold and what he did there, were a perfect blank to him.

Whenever I have spun this yarn the doubters have invariably hit on what they call the weak points—first, how could the man have lashed his raft? Why wouldn't he rather have climbed up and let it go? My theory is that he did this lashing in a fortunate moment couldn't have left the one and got on the other without lashing.

EDGAR T. THORPE